MARVEL REMEMBERS

JOHN ROMITA

MARVEL 4

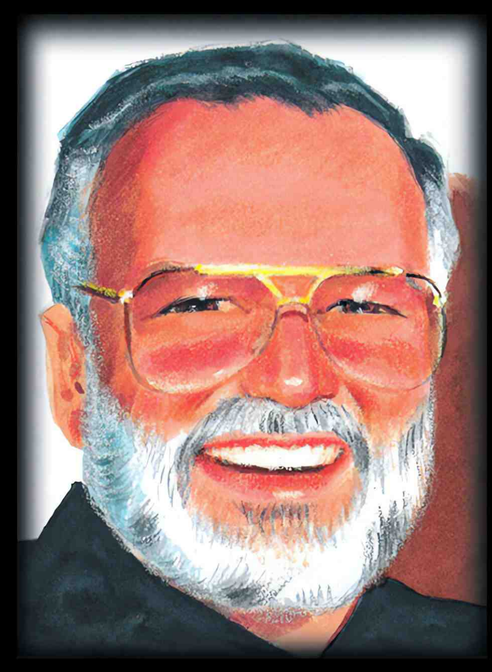
DANNY KETCH GHOST RIDER

MACKIE
PICCIOTTO
GURU-eFX

PARENTAL ADVISORY

John Romita

1930 – 2023



Marvel mourns the passing of comic-book artist John Romita Sr., whose work on *Amazing Spider-Man* helped make the character a worldwide sensation. In his work as Marvel's art director, he designed the Punisher and Wolverine and served as mentor for countless artists during his decades-long tenure with the company.

Romita had a profound effect on everyone he met at Marvel. He was always kind and warm and served as an inspiration to all who knew him or followed his work. Romita helped build the Marvel Universe as we know it, and he will be greatly missed.

"John Romita Sr. was an incomparable artist who brought so many iconic Marvel characters to life on the page and set the tone and look of Marvel's comics for decades. His version of Spider-Man has inspired so many of us at Marvel Studios. Our thoughts are with his family and the generations of artists and fans who fell in love with the characters he drew."

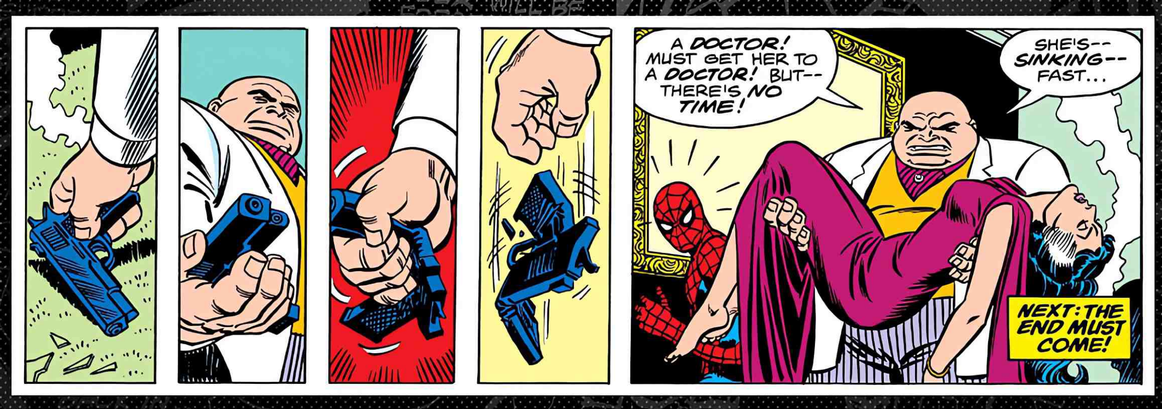
— KEVIN FEIGE

"I was recently able to fawn over some of John Romita Sr.'s original Spider-Man pages, and the word that kept popping into my mind as I marveled over his linework was 'timeless.' His style was such a departure from what had come before, which John did say made him nervous, but one that came to define the look of Peter, Spider-Man, MJ, Gwen and everyone else in their orbit. And the same was true for every Marvel character John designed, penciled and inked. Whether as an artist or art director, John's work influenced generations of comic book artists. With his passing, the comic industry loses a true legend, but just like his artwork, his legacy will remain timeless."

— C.B. CEBULSKI

"When you close your eyes and picture Spider-Man, you're probably picturing a John Romita Sr. Spider-Man. From his debut of the character in *Amazing Spider-Man #39*, the subsequent fifty issues of art, more than a hundred covers and the work he did on the newspaper strip, John defined Spidey for generations of people around the world. That would be enough for anyone else, but John was also an excellent art director, a fantastic father, a doting grandfather and a gentleman. All of us making Spider-Man comics, and Marvel Comics in general, work in his shadow and strive to live up to the example of the legend, Jazzy John Romita."

— NICK LOWE



DECADES OF AMAZING WORK

John Romita wore many hats at Marvel. His most famous contribution was his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, including the above cover to the series' landmark fiftieth issue. His association with the character would include drawing the cover of the famed wedding of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21*, seen opposite top right. With Stan Lee, he started the Spider-Man newspaper strip, including the sequence with Kingpin from Sept. 25, 1977, seen opposite center. Behind the scenes, Romita was responsible for designing many of Marvel's most famous characters. At bottom opposite are Romita's costume designs for Black Widow and Wolverine.

"One of the highlights of my career was working with John Romita Sr. I couldn't believe that my 25-year-old self was working and interacting with him, and what made it even better was that he was so considerate and kind – something that has stuck with me ever since, among many other memories with him. It was one of the rare moments where you meet one of your heroes and he exceeds your expectations in every possible way.

His contributions to Marvel's pantheon and culture are immense, and he will be sorely missed. He was a great and kind man who truly made the world a better place. My deepest condolences to Virginia, Johnny and the Romita family."

— DAN BUCKLEY

SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

THE TUNNELS BENEATH NEW YORK CITY.

FOR AS LONG AS ANYONE CAN REMEMBER, THEY'VE BEEN USED BY THE HOMELESS AND THOSE CAST FROM THE SURFACE SOCIETY.

THIS PARTICULAR TUNNEL LEADS TO THE HOME OF...

HELP... ME...I... CAN'T...

...THE OUTCAST MUTANTS KNOWN AS THE MORLOCKS.

MY THROAT... MY STOMACH... THEY BURN.

HELP... ME...

I ATE SOMETHING IN THE CEMETERY... SOMETHING TASTY...BUT BAD!

AREN'T YOU ALWAYS, SCAV?!

AND WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' BACK HERE?

WE THOUGHT YOU WAS DEAD, SCAV. THEN WE HEARD YOU WERE PICKIN' UP SCRAPS IN THE GRAVEYARDS.

I... NEED... HELP--

DON'T CARE.

YOU'VE BEEN BANISHED EVER SINCE THE MASSACRE,* AND YOU WAS FOUND EATIN' THE BODIES OF OUR FALLEN.

*SEE X-MEN: MUTANT MASSACRE! --DS

DON'T LET ME SEE YOU BACK HERE, SCAV.

I'LL KILL YOU EVEN IF IT GETS ME BANISHED!

SO HUNGRY!

CAN'T MAKE THE PAIN IN MY STOMACH GO AWAY.

NEED... FOOD... NEED TO EAT SOMETHING... ANYTHING--

SPLSH SPLSH

WE ALWAYS GET LOST DOWN HERE.

WHY CAN'T THEY MAKE THE SIGNS AND MARKERS BIGGER?

BECAUSE THE SURFACE PEOPLE COULD FIND US, DUMMY!

HELP ME. PLEASE HELP ME.

I AM SO...

...HUNGRY!

ACK!

GERK!

CHOMP CHOMP

CHOMP

URP!

AN ENDING

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GURU-eFX colorist
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NOAH SHARMA asst. editor DARREN SHAN editor C.B. CEBULSKI editor in chief

RHINEBECK, NY.

NOW.

CARETAKER... IS HE...DEAD...?

I DO NOT KNOW, BLAZE.

WHAT THE--?!

GHOST RIDER? THAT BETTER DAMNED WELL BE RAIN AND NOT YOU CRYING, YOU BAG OF BONES!

YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK *THAT* WAS GOING TO KILL *ME?*

YOU'VE GOT NO CLUE WHAT CRAP I'VE BEEN THROUGH... AND I'M STILL KICKING.

I'M THRILLED YOU'RE TOUGH *AND* OLD, BUT MY *ONLY* CONCERN IS...

...YOU HELPING US FIND BLACKOUT AND SCARECROW SO THEY CAN BRING ME TO ROXANNE AND MY KIDS.

LOVE YOU TOO, *BLAZE,* BUT...

...WE CAN'T GO AFTER THEM HALF-ASSED. THERE'S MORE GOING ON HERE THAN I ORIGINALLY THOUGHT.

SUDDENLY, EVERYONE'S POWERS ARE THROUGH THE ROOF... AND WHEN SCARE-CROW WAS GETTING THE PENANCE STARE...SOMEHOW THERE WAS FEEDBACK TO *DAN?*

I NEED TO TALK TO THE KID.

WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE THIS OUT, AND *THEN* I CAN GET YOU TO THOSE TWO LOWLIFES AND YOUR FAMILY.

KLIK

NO. I NEED TO GET TO MY WIFE AND KIDS *NOW!*

WE'LL FIGURE OUT THE SUPERNATURAL CRAP LATER.

YOU BETTER PUT THAT TOY DOWN, **BLAZE**, OR I'M GOING TO HAVE TO SHOVE IT UP YOUR--

NO. FIGHTING EACH OTHER WASTES TIME.

FWOOSH

TALK.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

LOOK, CARETAKER...I KNOW CEMETERIES ARE YOUR THING, BUT I NEED TO FIND MY WIFE AND KIDS *NOW.*

YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK...SO *TALK!*

I'M WITH BLAZE ON THIS. HIS FAMILY AND *STACY* ARE IN THE HANDS OF THOSE MANIACS, AND--

BOTH OF YOU CALM DOWN.

CEMETERIES *ARE* "MY THING," AND WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO QUEENS--THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE ALL BEING HELD.

WHAT THE HELL--?! WE'RE WASTING TIME HERE WHEN WE SHOULD BE RIDING DOWN--

YEAH... LET'S GET GOING--

KREEE

TRUST ME... *MY* WAY IS GOING TO BE FASTER.

WHAT THE--?!

STAY *DIRECTLY* BEHIND ME.

THIS IS HOW I GET AROUND. *THIS* IS HOW I GOT TO RHINEBECK BEFORE YOU DID, KID.

DON'T RIDE OFF THE PATH, AND DON'T ENTER ANY DOOR UNLESS I SAY SO.

THIS IS HOW WE GET TO THOSE HOLDING YOUR LOVED ONES.

LET'S MOVE.

AT THAT MOMENT...

YOU ARE MAKING A *BIG* MISTAKE, FATSO!

YOU WILL ADDRESS HIM AS *MASTER*, OR--

OR WHAT, BLACKOUT?

I'M POLICE OFFICER ***STACY DOLAN*** OF THE NYPD, AND MY DEPARTMENT IS GOING TO RAIN HOLY HELL DOWN ON YOU FOR KIDNAPPING ONE OF THEIR OWN.

MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T ANTAGONIZE THE SUPER-POWERED SERIAL KILLERS, STACY?

JUST CREATE A DISTRACTION, ROXANNE.

OH *NO*...NOT THE *POLICE!* THE HORROR!

TAKE THEM BACK TO THEIR CELL.

THE OTHER TWO ARE DRAWING NEAR... SOMEHOW I CAN FEEL THEIR PRESENCE.

MAYBE I WILL HAVE THEM FOR DINNER LATER.

OOPH!

UGH!

WOMP

NICE.

BRING ME THOSE WHO POSSESS THE POWER I CRAVE!

TONIGHT, I *FEAST* ON *HELLFIRE!*

PROSPECT CEMETERY, QUEENS.

WE'RE HERE.

WHERE?

WHOEVER HAS YOUR PEOPLE IS BASED HERE.

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW HE HAS ACCRUED SO MUCH POWER OR HOW HE DISCOVERED THE ***UNDERWORLD PASSAGE***--I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS--BUT HE IS DEFINITELY HERE.

VERY PERCEPTIVE...

...CARETAKER.

YOU?

I DIDN'T THINK WE'D MET UNTIL NOW.

WE HAVEN'T, ***BROKER***... BUT I'VE COME ACROSS YOUR KIND BEFORE.

AH...MY BROTHER-IN-ARMS, ***THE TITHE COLLECTOR?****

ALONG WITH OTHERS.

*SEE GAMBIT LIMITED SERIES (1993). --DS

IS THAT DISAPPROVAL I SENSE IN YOUR TONE, CARETAKER?

EITHER WAY... I THANK YOU FOR BRINGING THESE TWO HERE. MY CLIENT WILL BE PLEASED.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE BEING HELD BENEATH THE OLD CHAPEL.

TAKE THE PATH TO THE LEFT AND YOU'LL FIND IT.

GO! I'LL JOIN YOU WHEN I'M DONE HERE.

AREN'T YOU THE CONFIDENT ONE, OLD MAN.

VROOM VROOM

YEAH... MY EGO...IT'S A FAILING OF MINE.

YOU BEING INVOLVED IN THE MIX EXPLAINS A LOT!

NEVER LIKED YOUR TYPE... MORE MERCENARIES THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

LET'S DO THIS!

CRACK

YOU KNOW THIS IS A TRAP, RIGHT?

YUP.

BUT ROXANNE AND THE KIDS ARE HERE...I CAN FEEL IT.

SO...?

VROOM

KTASH

NOW WHAT?

WE WAIT AND--

KRAK

WELCOME, MY FRIENDS!

I'VE SO BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING YOU!

JOHNNY!

DADDY!

NO, NO, NO...

YOU HEARD HIM, BRATS!

KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THEM, CREEP!

ARGH!

THWAK

STACY!

I--!

YES...YES... YES.

THIS IS WHAT I SENSED.

IT WASN'T THEM.

IT WAS THIS!

THE THING OF WHICH I HAD THE SMALLEST OF TASTES SO MANY YEARS AGO.

I MUST... HAVE...IT... ALL!

MUST DEVOUR IT ALL!

MUST HAVE ALL THE POWER!

FWOOSH

YOU WILL HAVE NOTHING BUT THE PAIN THAT YOU HAVE INFLICTED ON OTHERS FOR YEARS.

I CAN SENSE THE BLOOD OF SO MANY INNOCENTS WAFTING FROM EVERY PORE OF YOUR BEING.

YES... ISN'T IT LOVELY?

LET'S FINISH THIS AND PUT THESE TWO OUT OF OUR MISERY!

OH...YES... LET'S SPLAY THEM OPEN AND RELEASE THEIR DELICIOUS FEAR INTO THE--

NO.

I WILL BE THE *ONLY* ONE TO FEAST TONIGHT!

AND FOR THAT, I REQUIRE THE GIFTS I GAVE YOU.

THE POWER.

NOOOOOOO!

ARRRRGH!

THE MOMENT I DEVOURED THE SLIVER OF YOUR *MEDALLION OF POWER*...

...ITS ARCANE NATURE INTERACTED WITH MY MUTATED GENES--CREATING POWERS I STILL DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND.

THE BROKER CAME TO ME... HELPED ME GAIN *SOME* SENSE OF CONTROL...

...AND HELPED TRANSFORM ME FROM A PATHETIC LITTLE *MORLOCK* INTO...

...THE MASTER!

THE BROKER HELPED ME CHANNEL SOME OF THESE ENERGIES INTO OTHERS... ONLY BY GIVING THEM POWERS IN EXCHANGE FOR A TASTE OF THEIR EXPERIENCES...

...CAN I KEEP MY POWERS--AND THE EVER PRESENT *HUNGER*--IN CHECK!

BUT NOW I AM TIRED OF BEING IN CONTROL.

I WILL CONSUME THE ENTIRE MEDALLION OF POWER...DIGEST ALL OF ITS MYSTICAL ENERGIES...

...AND THEN I WILL DEVOUR THE *WORLD!*

YOU ARE STRONGER THAN I HAD HEARD, OLD MAN.

I GET THAT A LOT.

NO.

I FEEL IT TOO. WHAT IS IT?

NOTHING GOOD.

AND DEFINITELY NOT PART OF THE BARGAIN THAT WAS STRUCK BETWEEN ME AND MY CLIENT.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP... COME.

DAMMIT!

WE'VE GOT TO GET STACY, ROXANNE AND THE KIDS OUT OF HERE.

KTOOM

BOOOF

OH... YES!

YUM!

ONCE I'VE EATEN THAT MEDALLION, I *WILL* HAVE YOUR SHOTGUN FOR DESSERT!

GO. GET THEM TO SAFETY.

YOU ARE ONLY MAKING HIM STRONGER.

NEVER MIND!

I'M JUST GOING TO EAT YOU BOTH RIGHT NOW.

BE DONE WITH THIS STUPID FIGHT AND SAVOR THE MEDALLION OF POWER IN PEACE.

THWACK

UGH!

THE MEDALLION OF POWER?

YES.

THE MISSING SHARD?

APPARENTLY HE CONSUMED IT, AND IT CHANGED HIM.

CARE TO TELL ME HOW *YOU* KNOW ANY OF THIS?

MY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT *ANY* OBJECT OF THE ARCANE ON WHICH WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE A PROFIT.

ENOUGH!

FWOMP

I'M HUNGRY!

I WILL EAT!

I WILL CONSUME THE POWER!

AND THEN I WILL USE YOUR BONES TO PICK MY TEETH, GHOST RIDER!

ACK!

YOU WILL NOT HAVE THE MEDALLION, MONSTER!

HE'S TEN TIMES STRONGER EVEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MEDALLION. IF HE'S ALLOWED TO CONSUME IT--

I THOUGHT *HE* WAS YOUR MASTER?

NO...HE *THINKS* HE IS MY MASTER. TO *ME,* HE'S JUST A CLIENT.

ONE THAT I'D RATHER NOT BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DEVOUR THE WORLD. NO PROFIT IN THAT.

AFTER THIS IS OVER, YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE A TALK.

NO, WE WON'T.

LET'S JUST HELP STOP THIS.

YES! *THIS* IS THE TASTE OF...

...POWER!!!

WHAT THE--?!

TAKE THE SHOVEL, DAMMIT!

AND *USE* IT!

WHOA!

THUMP

WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY DO WITH THAT SHOV--?

WHAT--?

NO!

KRAK

NOT MY--

KRAK

--TEEF.

KRAK

NOW YOU WILL FEEL THE PAIN OF MY *PENANCE*--

WAIT. I SENSE SOMETHING FAMILIAR INSIDE HIM.

YEAH... DON'T DO THAT.

I'M NOT REALLY SURE *WHAT* WOULD HAPPEN.

MY TEEF! MY TEEF! I AM *SO* HUNGRY.

ROX HAS CALLED AN AMBULANCE, SO THE POLICE ARE GOING TO BE ALL OVER THIS PLACE FAST.

I'M GOOD WITH THEM TAKING BLACKOUT AND SCARECROW AWAY, BUT... CAN THEY HANDLE *HIM?*

WE'LL TAKE--

THERE IS NO *"WE."*

EVEN A SLIVER OF THE MEDALLION OF POWER WILL BE WORTH SOMETHING TO *SOMEONE.*

MY COLLEAGUES WILL SEE IF THEY CAN EXTRACT IT.

WHO KNOWS...MAYBE WE'LL COME FOR THE REST OF IT SOMEDAY.

UNTIL THEN, *OLD MAN!*

WILL THE MISSING PIECE ALWAYS IMPACT *DANNY* AND ME?

YEAH... I THINK SO.

BUT I'LL BE KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON YOU *BOTH.*

THE END.

FOR MORE FULL-THROTTLE ADVENTURE, CHECK OUT THE *GHOST RIDER* ONGOING SERIES!

JOHNNY BLAZE HAS BEEN TRAVELING WITH THE BRILLIANT HEDGE WITCH, TALIA WARROAD, BUT NOW TALIA'S MESSY PAST, HER TEENAGE LOVES AND FURIOUS FIRST SPELLS, WILL PULL INTO HIS LANE. JUST WHO IS TALIA WARROAD, AND HOW WAS HER LIFE SET ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE? GUEST-STARRING **DOCTOR STRANGE!**

GHOST RIDER #18

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